



PHHS Block Grant: Executive Summary

What is it?

The Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant offers federal dollars to states using pass-through funding. Pass-through funding is when a federal agency—in this case, the CDC—distributes funds to states like Wisconsin, who then pass the funds through to local health departments (LHDs) through various grants and contracts.

The PHHS Block Grant is part of a mandatory spending program called the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), established in 2010 as a part of the Affordable Care Act. The funding is an investment in national public health programs to improve health outcomes and lower health care costs.

Why is this important?

The PHHS Block Grant is a cornerstone public health program for preventing disease, illness, and injury. It gives grantees the flexibility to prioritize the use of funds based on their unique needs. Flexibility is key to allow grantees to set their own goals and program objectives and implement strategies designed to meet their prioritized public health needs.

How is it used?

In recent years, Wisconsin has allocated their approximately \$3 million award across four primary program areas. Program areas and associated goals for fiscal year 2024 are summarized below.

- Meeting accreditation standards and measures: The Division of Public Health will meet the Public Health Accreditation Board standards and measures.
- Supporting community-based foundational public health areas: Communities throughout Wisconsin will implement prevention and reduction intervention strategies to address Foundational Public Health Areas impacting residents.
- Supporting community-based foundational public health capabilities: Local and Tribal health departments in Wisconsin will strengthen their implementation of the Foundational Public Health Capabilities.
- Increasing sexual assault prevention and services*: The Division of Public Health will support the increase of sexual violence prevention and services to survivors and stakeholders in Wisconsin.

*The state is required to use a defined amount of PHHS Block Grant funds to provide sexual assault services to survivors.

What have the impacts been at the local level?

The PHHS Block Grant has been awarded to states since 1981. In Wisconsin, we have continued to build upon prior year goals in areas that strengthen public health at the state and local levels. When we continue to support the work, we continue to improve the public health system as a whole.

The following examples show how local partners are using PHHS Block Grant funds to support their communities' unique needs.

- In northern Wisconsin, a LHD utilized funds to create and distribute "tick kits," providing education to the public about common ticks and tick-borne diseases, as well as insect-repellent wipes and tick removal tools.
- Another LHD offered their community "Safe Sitter" training sessions, where 70 youth and teenagers were trained in babysitting safety, aimed at addressing the shortage of affordable childcare options.
- A sub-grantee used their funds to support aging populations through fall reduction initiatives, including a collaboration with area fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) to host "Stepping On" sessions (fall prevention education and balance screenings) at older adult health fairs.
- Another LHD supported their aging population by partnering with the Meals on Wheels program to hand deliver meals to seniors along with paper copies of their community health assessment, with the goal of improving community engagement and hearing about unique needs of senior citizens (an underserved population).
- A LHD representing a larger urban city utilized funds to support a mobile health services van, which they used to host six educational illness prevention events (for example, visitors were shown how to monitor blood pressure at home and why this is important).
- Another LHD spent their funds partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) to educate their high schoolers on driver safety through a "buckle up" program.
- In another community, 75 people were trained in trauma-informed care and "Question, Persuade, Refer" (QPR) suicide prevention training.
- A Tribal health department used funds to support the "Together Raising Awareness for Indian Life (TRAILS)" program to provide weekly afterschool and weekend programming to youth and families, educating on good exercise and healthy eating habits.

The examples of how PHHS Block Grant funding is used are vast and expansive, each representing needs as unique as each of our Wisconsin communities. At the state level and among local partners, this funding is relied upon to support creative initiatives aimed at preventing poor health outcomes, especially among our most vulnerable populations, including youth, elderly, Black, Indigenous, and other residents of color, rural residents, among others.